

GVPT 200: International Political Relations

Connor Kopchick
Instructor
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Basics

Course Meeting: MTWThF 10:00AM – 1:00PM (EST) - online

ELMS Site: <https://myelms.umd.edu> (login required)

Office Hours: virtual by appointment

Course Overview

This course will provide an overview of the major theories of international relations, which will give students the conceptual tools to understand the complex relations between states today. Who are the actors, their goals, and the means of interactions between states? The course will then move on to explore the breadth of international relations, covering conflict and cooperation in the realms of security and political economy. We also apply these lessons to topics of recent interest to scholars, including human rights activism, covert activity, and the global response to COVID-19. The course will draw from peer-reviewed articles, book excerpts, and current news.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have gained:

- A stronger general understanding of world politics;
- Foundations of theory and history in the subfield of international relations necessary for more advanced study and work; and
- Enhanced critical thinking skills and in-depth knowledge of contemporary issues in world politics.

Instructor Introduction

My name is Connor Kopchick and I am PhD student at the University of Maryland, where I study comparative politics and international relations, focusing mostly on emigrant communities and repression. I earned my undergraduate degree from Davidson College in North Carolina, and studied abroad for two semesters, one in India and the other in Jordan. Before coming to UMD I worked for several national security contractors and spent nine months traveling between Egypt and the West Bank. I hope to share with you how these experiences led me to this course of study.

Required Readings

All readings will be available online or in PDF form via ELMS. Please note that these PDFs are distributed for educational purposes, may be protected by copyright, and should not be reproduced or distributed further. Some PDFs may have notes in the margins from previous readers but should be fully legible.

I have worked hard to select readings that are informative, engaging, and accessible. You will not be required to purchase textbooks or other reading materials for this course. You will be required however, to complete readings in preparation for class. Readings listed under the class date should be completed by our meeting time on that day. Not only will your grade be partially

determined by actively engaging with the assigned texts, doing so will also foster more engaging classroom discussions and a better experience for everyone.

Grade Breakdown

Assessment:	Assessment Date:	Percentage of Final Grade:
Short Answer Quiz	7/16	10%
Short Paper	7/19	15%
Simulation Performance (including Response Paper)	7/23	25%
Final Exam	7/30	25%
Active Participation	Ongoing	25%

The course will offer a variety of forms of assessment. Students will be assigned a brief, in-class, short answer quiz on the readings at the end of the first week of the course (7/16) to gauge comprehension. On 7/19 students will be asked to turn in a brief paper applying the lessons learned thus far in the course. At the end of our second week (7/26) we'll hold a "simulation" based on a pressing international issue. Students will be graded on their active participation and performance in the exercise, as well as a brief response paper to the activity, which will be due on the following Monday (7/26). There will be a final exam during the last day (7/30) of the course. I will provide more information on the exam and other assignments as the course progresses, while ensuring that students have reasonable time to prepare. Lastly, participation in our daily Zoom meetings will be a major factor in the student's final assessment.

Grade Ranges:

Late work (unless excused) will be penalized by half of a letter grade for every day that it is late. Extensions are only granted with an excuse cleared with the instructor.

A+: 97-100
B+: 87-89.9
C+: 77-79.9
D+: 67-69.9
F: below 60

A: 93-96.9
B: 83-86.9
C: 73-76.9
D: 63-66.9

A-: 90-92.9
B-: 80-82.9
C-: 70-72.9
D-: 60-62.9

Course Policies

Students will adhere to standards set forth in the Terp Young Scholars Code of Academic Integrity and Code of Student Conduct. All suspected cases of student conduct violations and/or academic dishonesty will be reported. Students are encouraged to read and become familiar with both Codes.

The Student Code of Conduct can be found here: https://oes.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2021-02/tys_student_conduct_21.pdf. And the Code of Academic Integrity here: https://oes.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2021-02/tys_academic_integrity_21.pdf.

If you have any questions reach out to myself or the appropriate Terp Young Scholar personnel. Respect your instructor and your fellow students.

Please keep yourself muted on Zoom at all times unless asking a question or participating in breakout rooms to avoid background noise. The sharing of any Zoom link to participants outside of the class is prohibited.

Accessibility

If you have any condition that requires accommodation, please contact Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) office to obtain a letter of accommodation. I will make every effort to work with you to meet any special needs, provided that you have presented the proper ADS documentation. Details on obtaining support through ADS can be found here: <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>.

Course Schedule

Week 1:

Session 1 (7/12): Introduction

Walt, S. M. 1998. "International Relations: One World, Many Theories." *Foreign Policy* 110, 29-46.

Session 2 (7/13): Realism

Mearsheimer, John. 2014. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (revised ed.). New York: Norton. (Chapter 2, pp. 29-54)

Session 3 (7/14): Liberalism

Jones, Calvert. 2015. "The Surprising Effects of Study Abroad." *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage*. August 25.

Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/20/the-surprising-effects-of-study-abroad/>

Moravcsik, Andrew. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51(4): 513-553.

Session 4 (7/15): Constructivism

Wendt, A. 1992. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization*, 46(2), 391-425.

Session 5 (7/16): Rational, Cognitive, and Other Approaches

Short Answer Quiz

Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books. pp. 73-87.

Available at: <https://www.gwern.net/docs/economics/1984-axelrod-theevolutionofcooperation-ch4-theliveandletlivesysteminwwi.html>

Week 2:

Session 1 (7/19): Conflict 1

Short Paper Due @ 5PM EST

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22-49.

Session 2 (7/20): Domestic Determinants of IR

Croco, Sarah. 2011. "The Decider's Dilemma: Leader Culpability, War Outcomes, and Domestic Punishment." *The American Political Science Review* 105 (3): 457-477.

Session 3 (7/21): Conflict 2

Laub, Zachary. 2021. "Syria's Civil War: The Descent into Horror." Council on Foreign Relations. March 17. <https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war>

Fearon, James D. "Civil War & the Current International System." *Daedalus* 146(4): 18-32. <https://www.amacad.org/publication/civil-war-current-international-system>

Session 4 (7/21): International Organizations

Mearsheimer, John. 1994. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19(3): 5-49.

Suggested:

Abidin, Shazelina Z. 2017. "International Organisations." In *International Relations* ed. Stephen McGlinchey. Bristol, England: E-International Relations Publishing. Pp. 71-77.

Session 5 (7/23): Simulation

Read Preparatory Material

Week 3:

Session 1 (7/26): International Political Economy

Simulation Response Paper Due @ 5PM EST

Hainmueller, Jens, and Michael J. Hiscox. 2006. "Learning to Love Globalization: Education and Individual Attitudes toward International Trade." *International Organization* 60(2): 469-98.

Suggested:

Walzenbach, Günter. 2017. "Global Political Economy." In *International Relations* ed. Stephen McGlinchey. Bristol, England: E-International Relations Publishing. Pp. 87-97.

Session 2 (7/27): Human Rights

Keck, Margaret E. and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (Chapter 1, pp. 1-38)

Session 3 (7/28): Intelligence and Covert IR

Carson, Austin, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2017. "Covert Communication: The Intelligibility and Credibility of Signaling in Secret." *Security Studies* 26(1): 124–56.

Session 4 (7/29): COVID-19

Patrick, Stewart. 2020. "When the System Fails." *Foreign Affairs* 99(4): 40-51.

Session 5 (7/30): Final Exam